

Socialist Worker

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STOP NUCLEAR TESTS

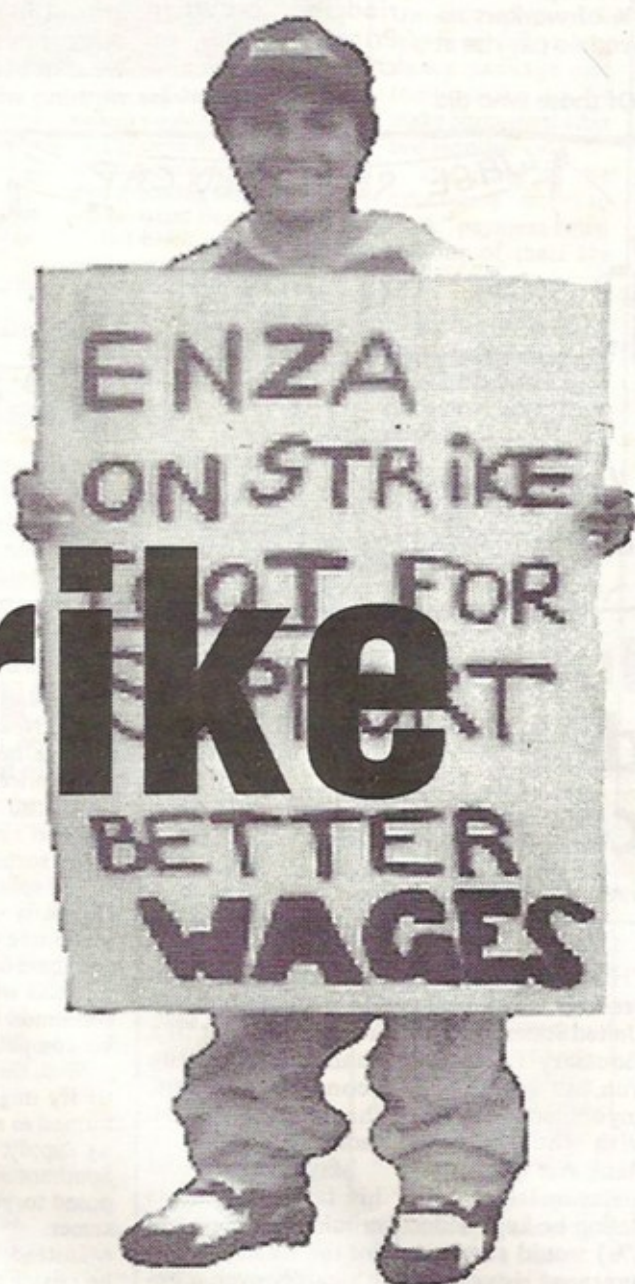
Mass protests needed.

For Workers Power and International Socialism

\$1

Inflation up! Real Wages Down!

It's Right To Strike



**ENZA victory
shows direct
action is the
way to win!**

So where's our share?

by Andrew Geddis

DESPITE ALL the back patting by the Nats and financial markets following Bill Birch's budget the truth is that for the majority life is getting harder and harder.

This is the message behind figures released by Statistics New Zealand, the governments own record keepers, last week. These show that in the year ending in May a massive 55% of workers received no pay rise at all.

Of those who did

receive an increase, only 25% of workers had a rise over 2%. In the same period, the consumer price index rose by 4%!

This means the majority of workers have taken what is equal to a 4% pay cut in just one year.

As if this wasn't bad enough, Statistics NZ also found that in the period since December 1992 36% of workers have received absolutely no pay rise. In the same period the Consumer Price Index has increased by 9%.

So over the past 2-

and-a-half years a third of New Zealand workers have had their pay effectively cut by 9%!

Figures also show that where there has been an increase in weekly incomes it is usually due to employers paying "bonuses" or workers working longer hours. But once business profits fall you can be sure these will dry up!

What we need is a united push to get wages up. The rich are getting richer at our expense, and if we don't stop them nothing will!



Just who does run the country?

by Andrew Geddis

THE SENIOR vice-president of the big United States investor Fiduciary Trust, Bill Yun, has warned that any attempt to tamper with the Reserve Bank Act (which requires by law that inflation be kept under 2%) would result in overseas investors "re-examining their investments".

The Fiduciary Trust

controls some \$42.4 billion in investments, including \$3 billion in the Asian region. Mr Yun warned that "if a change altered the economic reforms, that would be too radical."

Maybe Mr Yun and his fellow business cronies think so, but for the majority of us it's hardly even a beginning. But then, we're not running the country. So who is?

POWER CORRUPTS

The Nats want to split the Electricity Corporation of New Zealand (ECNZ) into two, claiming that the increased competition will lower consumer prices. At present ECNZ is a State Owned Enterprise responsible for producing most of New Zealand's electricity and selling it to local electricity supply companies.

The split will mean two companies producing electricity with local supply companies choosing which one to buy their power from. Jim Bolger and some of his cabinet colleagues have promised that this will decrease the cost of power to the consumer. Looks like another triumph for market competition?

Well, the staff and customers of United Electricity might disagree. United Electricity was formed as a result of the deregulation of electricity supply, and provides power to most of the Southern South Island. This deregulation was supposed to, you guessed it, lower prices to the consumer.

Instead, United Electricity has announced it will be raising prices between 3% to 5% in October and laying off twelve of its staff in order to save \$750 000. Now there's a triumph for the free market!

Cup success

THE AMERICA'S Cup is beginning to give huge benefits to New Zealand already. Or, at least, its benefitting some people already.

The success of "Team New Zealand" has paid off handsomely for one of its chief backers. Lion Nathan Ltd has increased its share of the New Zealand beer market from 60.7% in May 1994 to 62.4% this May.

The company credited the increase to the success of its Steinlager brand, due in the main to its connection with the Cup fever.

What will happen if the All Blacks win the World Cup?

The Employment Tribunal has upheld a decision to award a Pakistani worker almost \$30 000 in unpaid wages, legal costs, and interest. Mohammed Aslam Khan began a week-long hunger strike in January after immigration officials tried to deport him before his claim was heard.

Bolger's Decent Society



In the 1990 election campaign, Jim Bolger pledged to create a "decent society". Let's see how his promise has translated into reality.

DESPITE ALL the promises of "more efficient services" and "better care", the Nats health reforms are only bankrupting our hospitals. Recent figures show that Crown Health Enterprises (or "CHEs", the fancy new name for what we usually call hospitals) continue to run up huge debts.

In the quarter year ending in December CHEs lost \$45 million. In the quarter year ending in March they did a little better, losing only \$31.7 million. Of course, you may wonder how money spent on keeping or making people healthy can be "lost" in the first place!

The lower losses were due to "cuts in expenditure" - less money spent on health care and more staff sacked. But despite this, 20 CHEs remain in deficit. Since the health reforms began CHEs have run up a massive \$1.6 billion in total debts.

CASES OF scurvy and rickets, diseases associated with inadequate diets, are beginning to appear in children in Auckland. As well as this, there has been a 49% rise in the number of admissions of children to hospital with flu and pneumonia since 1990.

In the same period, admissions of children suffering from respiratory infections have risen by 36%. There has also been a re-emergence of tuberculosis, a disease that is one of the leading causes of child death in the third world.

All these conditions are linked to poverty, and admissions are "coming predominantly from less affluent areas".

IN THE wake of Bill Birch's "extra" \$63 million given to beneficiaries in the budget it is worth remembering that in 1991 Ruth Richardson took over \$1000 million from them to reduce the deficit. Now we're in surplus, how about giving it back?

NOW IS THE TIME TO STEP UP THE PRESSURE!

ENZA WORKERS won a victory. Through their determined strike action they got the 4 percent pay rise they were demanding.

Their employer has been making record profits, and spending huge amounts in sponsorship of events like the Americas Cup – but when it came to workers wages it was a different story.

The ENZA victory is an opening salvo in the “just jobs, just wages” campaign launched by the Trade Union Federation.

Unions affiliated to TUF are making a concerted push for wage rises at least equal to the 4% inflation rate.

The victory shows what can be done when workers take action. It contrasts with the Council of Trade Unions non-campaign launched 284 days ago by CTU president Ken Douglas.

It has become fashionable in some top lev-

els of the trade union movement to brand workers struggle as “old fashioned”. Workplace reform and so-called worker participation are the “new” way, and those who call for industrial action are branded the “dinosaurs”.

Workplace reform inevitably traps the union movement into helping the boss cut jobs and wages while increasing productivity.

The ENZA struggle is yet another example of the fact that it is direct action which gets results.

In March Auckland chemical workers employed by an Australian multi-national won back a collective contract and a 4% pay rise after picketting their factory

for two days.

A few days ago the giant Shell Oil Company was forced to abandon plans to dump a dis-used oil rig loaded with toxic materials in the North Sea, after widespread protests and consumer boycotts.

In France mass protests forced the government to drop cuts to tertiary education.

In March thousands

of German metal workers struck, and won a wage rise without clawbacks. Metal industry bosses were forced to drop demands for more flexible work hours.

If we listened to the employers and politicians there would never be a time to increase wages.

In times of crisis workers are told we must make sacrifices. And in times of recovery we are told that increased wages will cause another recession.

Over the last 10 years workers wages have fallen well behind the rising cost of living. The gap between rich and

poor has increased dramatically.

Now there has been a pick-up in the economy. This is the time for workers to grab a greater slice of the profits they have produced.

The last couple of weeks have seen a significant increase in working class struggle – ENZA, Tegel, Wire-makers, clashes against non-union labour at Gisborne and Lyttelton ports, Air NZ cabin crews, Victoria University staff, Kindergarten teachers planned to strike, rail workers discussing further action.

Now is the time to step up the pressure.



ENZA workers on the picket line



Tegel picket in Auckland: Fighting for national contract and 4 percent.

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Rail to Riches Story

THE MERCHANT Bank Fay Richwhite, privately owned by just five executive directors, is to receive up to \$30 million in a payout to shareholders of NZ Rail. The bank owns 29.4% of NZ Rail's shares, and gets that share of a total \$100 million payout.

NZ Rail was sold off by the Nats in mid-1993 for \$400-million, just 4 times the total payout to shareholders.

Meanwhile, NZ Rail still refuses to meet the 2% wage claim of the Combined Union of Railway Employees. You can always depend on the ones at the top to feather their own nests first!

THINGS THEY SAY

"There is no plan to restructure the economy in favour of the people who usually vote Labour."

Former Labour Party leader David Lange on the return to "traditional Labour policy".

"To suggest that Labour may, under MMP, be as small as the Free Democrats in Germany which get around 10% of the vote is an appalling attack."

Former Labour Party leader Mike Moore on David Lange.

"Well, what do you expect from a monopoly where there is no proper competition?"

ACT leader Roger Douglas on recent cases of elderly patients being discharged at 3 in the morning.

"It's not a route any civilised government would take to get there. It's too brutal, and too socially divisive."

Australian Industry Minister Peter Cook on New Zealand's economic "reforms".

"...we would encourage journalists to see for themselves what's happening there and to look at it from a human interest perspective."

Indonesian journalist Kemala Ahwil on East Timor, where Indonesian troops have massacred over 200 000 inhabitants.

"To begin with, they were all saying it was just a bunch of rich bastards playing around in boats... when we won it suddenly became 'Our Cup'."
Lion Nathan boss Doug Myers on the Americas Cup which he helped bankroll.

My Old Man's An Economist...

IN THE week before the semi-finalists of the Rugby World Cup were decided, the results of a far more exciting sporting encounter were announced in the startled pages of the world press.

Two years before David Kirk's All Blacks won the first World Cup on Eden Park, the bosses magazine *The Economist* asked four "teams" to predict critical financial movements over the next decade - shifts in currencies, the price of oil, the comparative movements of world economies.

The four teams consisted of, first, students from Oxford University, second, finance ministers drawn from OECD countries, third, chairmen of multi-nationals and, fourth, a gang of dustmen from off the streets of London.

Well, as most would expect, the finance ministers got last. Like most of us they have little say over their economies and, truth be told, do not really know what is going on.

In third place came the students, still with a bit to learn about the world.

And first? It was a draw. The chairmen of the multinationals tied with the dusties!

Since a dustie's average rate of pay is about \$11 an hour, while the average company director's salary is well over \$200,000, wouldn't it be cheaper if we did it ourselves?

What an insult

DID YOU know that the protest actions of Maori at Waitangi on Waitangi Day this year were "serious violations" of the Treaty of Waitangi? Well, according to the President of the Court of Appeal, Sir Robin Cooke, that's what they were.

In ordering TVNZ to hand over footage of the protests to police as possible evidence he labelled the protest activity "calculated insults to the constitution and to high constitutional authorities" and in breach of the Treaty principles.

What is insulting is that our highest judge has the nerve to criticise Maori who are demanding their rights be respected for breaking the very Treaty the Crown has trampled on for 150 years!

what socialists say about...

Reforming the system

THE MAJORITY of people are sick and tired of this National government. We have suffered under their changes to the economy, and to health, education and welfare, only to see the rich benefiting at the expense of the majority.

What is more, most people want a better world than the one we live in, one that is free of the poverty, violence, sexism, racism and inequalities that plague our present society.

We are told the way to get rid of National and to make a better world lies in the reforms of the present system that are offered by such parties as the Alliance and Labour. They offer policies that are in the interests of the working class, women, Maori, beneficiaries and students. In policy and in terms of who supports them they are clearly different to the market madness of National and their friends.

Not Enough

Because of this, socialists support many of the reforms that the Alliance and Labour propose. Many working class people would benefit, albeit in minor ways, from an Alliance-Labour coalition government - provided their policies reflected the Alliance more than Labour!

But socialists do not uncritically back these parties. This is because we see them as essentially "reformist", seeking to patch up an ailing system. They remain committed to the capitalism, with all its inequalities and shortcomings, merely seeking to reform the worst aspects of it.

This approach has real problems. Firstly, it fails to address many of the ingrained inequalities that are a part of our system. For instance, it does not address the unequal position of women in society.

This is because these problems are deeply connected with the capitalist system itself. Any real attempt to solve them requires the dismantling and rebuilding of our entire society - something no parliamentary political party can

(or would want to) achieve.

The second problem with the reformist strategy is that it leaves real power in the hands of the tiny minority who control the production and distribution of all goods within our society. This minority capitalist class holds the real power in society as they control the economy, and any government relies on the taxes created by their economic activity for survival.

Thus the amount of reform that can be achieved depends upon how resistant this capitalist class is to change. If it feels the reforms are cutting into their profits too much they can respond by moving their money overseas, thus depriving the government of the tax dollars it needs to survive.

This is the reason that the leaders of the Alliance and Labour are always "reassuring" the markets that they can be trusted to run the country - because it is those who control the money who really determine what policies are achievable!

Revolution, not reform!

For these reasons socialists call for a vote for reform, but without illusions. No parliamentary party can reform capitalism, because real power lies in the boardrooms and offices of corporations, not in Parliament.

What we instead need is a genuine movement of those who suffer under capitalism - workers, Maori, beneficiaries, students, women, etc. This must be aimed not just at parliamentary power, but at control of every area of our lives - in the workplace, in the colleges, in our communities. Only then can we begin to address the problems built into our capitalist society.

Real change cannot be voted in, it must be fought for by everyone who wants a better world!

■ JOHN MOLYNEUX & ANDREW GEDDIS

How much has changed in the "new South Africa"?

by Roy Foley

THE SOUTH African government is using the Rugby World Cup to promote the image of a "New South Africa". Speaking at the opening ceremony in Cape Town, South African president Nelson Mandela indicated the days of apartheid are over, and spoke proudly of "our Rainbow Nation".

But how much has South Africa really changed? The "New South Africa" has inherited enormous problems from the apartheid days when capital made huge profits by paying pittance wages to black workers, and enjoyed low tax rates because the Nationalist government spent next to nothing to finance black township housing, health centres and education.

Here are the brutal facts:

- 80% of rural Black households have no water.
- Two thirds of Black homes have inadequate sewerage.
- 80% of houses in the former homelands have no electricity.
- 3 million suffer from malnutrition.
- Blacks earn only 13% of the White wage.

So what is Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress government doing about it? Are they taking active steps to even the distribution of wealth throughout society? Are they supporting the continuing struggles of the poor blacks to win an improved lifestyle?

Small concessions have been made. Free medical services have been provided for children and pregnant mothers. And the recent budget provided a few million rand for health, housing and education, while pensioners got a R25 per month increase.

But is this enough? At

the United Nations World Summit Conference on Poverty, Mandela pointed out South Africa was one of the most unequal societies on earth.

If such devastating inequality really concerns the ANC, it would be prepared to take the wealth held by big business and the white minority and spend it on people's needs.

In recent months, Glengold Mines announced profits of R3,198 billion, Anglo-American R144 million and the Delta Group \$US 2.2 billion.

But the ANC will do nothing to hit the rich and big business. The budget actually **reduced** tax for foreign investors.

The huge gap between rich and poor looks set to continue.

In recent weeks, the government has fobbed off student demonstrations to end fees for poor students with mere platitudes.

It has tried to undermine the rent boycotts by initiating the Masakhane ("Build Together Now") Campaign. And ANC leaders have called for an end to mass actions by black workers for more pay and to reduce the race wage gap.

The government actively seeks to undermine the mass organisations promoting community boycotts and union struggle. Worse, Mandela has openly called for repression to halt mass action.

In February, the presi-

dent called upon university managers to "use a heavy hand" to stop "disruptive" student protests.

In an interview, Mandela revealed he had told army leaders to crush the rebellion of Transkei policemen. "I told them," he said, "if you have to use live bullets, use them."

The ANC's attitude to-

wards former apartheid leaders is one of reconciliation. Day in, day out, more details are revealed about the direct links between De Klerk and his apartheid government with terroristic campaigns against anti-apartheid activists.

The ANC government refuses to put these murderers on trial!

It has introduced to parliament the Truth and Reconciliation Bill, which covers up who was responsible for apartheid atrocities.

Hearings can be held in secret. Victims will not be able to prosecute those who were guilty of racist crime. People who testify will be free from prosecu-

tion. And leaders like De Klerk will not be put on trial.

Mandela was prepared to forcibly suppress mass struggles to protect people who sided with King Ndamase – the former apartheid collaborator and Transkei president.

Said Mandela, "However much we condemn the bantustan system, Ndamase is king – this is the man who was president!"

More and more it appears that the high hopes black workers had that the end of apartheid would signal dramatic improvements in their lives will be dashed.

The huge gap between rich and poor looks set to continue. The ANC government is not on the side of the majority of people who continue to suffer appalling poverty.

It is little wonder that earlier this year, when Nelson Mandela entered the Ellis Park stadium to attend the second rugby international between England and South Africa, the mainly Afrikaner crowd in what had been an apartheid heartland, leapt to its feet and gave him a standing ovation!



South African teachers protest. The government offered a 1.4% increase, when inflation is over 10%.

Undermining Workers Struggle

THE SOUTH African Mineworkers Union (NUM) and the Clothing and Textile Union (SACTWU) are fighting for the following demands:

- Wage rises above the inflation rate.
- Closing the racial wage gap.
- Equal conditions for permanent and casual workers.

But Marcel Golding – ANC member of parliament and former NUM official – has called on unions to "move away from destructive practices like stay-aways".

Bosses will never concede demands by simply negotiating, so in effect, the government is calling for the teeth to be taken from workers struggle. If successful this will aid South African companies to continue making huge profits on the backs of low black wages.

The ANC government accompanies its attempts to discourage union struggle with a plan to introduce workplace reform.

The Labour Relations Bill proposes workplace forums made up of worker and management representatives. Supposedly this will give greater workplace democracy, but in practice the Bill will undermine a strong union movement built up in bitter struggle during the days of apartheid.

Bosnia— is there a solution?

AS THE situation in former Yugoslavia worsens, the National government has pledged to keep New Zealand soldiers there and to support U.S. policy.

For the first time, U.S. President Clinton has said he would send U.S. ground troops into Bosnia.

Clinton said at the beginning of June that he would consider making available more than 20,000 U.S. troops dispatched to the former Yugoslavia for evacuation of United Nations troops or to help "reposition" UN forces.

After facing criticism of his apparent move toward greater intervention in Bosnia, Clinton backed off, saying that U.S. troops would only be used "as a last resort."

But while Clinton wavered, the U.S.'s European allies, France and Britain, sent thousands of more troops to reinforce the positions of UN forces.

Don't take sides in this war

The fighting in Bosnia has been portrayed as a struggle between "good guys" and "bad guys".

But there is no "good" side in this terrible war.

Bosnia was the most multi-ethnic part of the multi-ethnic former Yugoslavia.

As the country collapsed, politicians on all sides stirred nationalism to carve out power for themselves.

Serb forces are undoubtedly guilty of ethnic cleansing.

They captured the most

land and committed more than their share of atrocities.

But Croatian forces have also driven people from their homes by terror and carried out massacres.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman in 1991 agreed to the partition of Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia.

His forces seized as much territory as they could - sometimes allying with the Muslim Bosnian Government, sometimes turning against them.

Increasingly, Muslim forces have behaved in a similar manner.

Contrary to all we are led to believe, the Serbs in Bosnia are not an invading army.

Most live in Bosnia. They have been rallied into

attacking their Muslim and Croat neighbours by nationalist leaders aiming to carve out power for themselves.

The politicians and generals on every side claim the only way to end the war is for their side to win.

But the answer lies with the ordinary workers and peasants of the area - with ordinary Serbs, Croats and Muslims seeing that they have more in common with one another than with their own leaders.

The hope is that they will turn on the warmongers on all sides who divide them.

Western intervention will only favour one set of butchers over another - and set back the possibility of a united fight against all the nationalists.

Bradford Riots Against Racist Police

TWO NIGHTS of street clashes in the northern English city of Bradford on June 10 and 11 left police and locals blaming each other for the violence. The mainstream media put the emphasis on a "generation gap" between local youth and their parents.

A local police commander said the police were not to blame: "I hear the answer is young people's alienation with society as a whole."

But the riots in Bradford were the result of harassment of the large Asian community by the police and the underlying poverty of the area. Asians have the worst unemployment rates for any ethnic group in the UK.

The specific causes appear to be a police car running over an Asian man's foot and trouble outside the local police station where the police were heavy handed in arresting a highly respected local teacher and hitting another Asian woman.

As one eyewitness re-



Riot police in Bradford, northern England, arrest a protestor during the June 10 clashes - The violence was provoked by police racism

ported, "There appears to be no conflict between black and white workers, indeed I saw some white people on footage of one of the demonstrations and some white people interviewed expressing sympathy for the protesters."

"In Manningham the real enemy is clearly the police and they know it, as demonstrated by the po-

lice fortress- it dominates the main crossroads in the heart of Manningham. Thirty foot, at least, walls built in classic fort fashion with wide bases to resist impact, electronic iron gates etc."

According to another eyewitness: "The riot was about class and poverty, not race. Racism comes in to it because it is racism

that conditions the police response. All businesses, black and white suffered from the riots. Overall the riot was victorious. Two police officers have been withdrawn from the area and the police look like the racist thugs that they are. Local politicians are backing the youth, including Max Madden, the Labour MP for the area."

World Notes

Brazil oil strike defeated

OIL WORKERS, on strike for more than a month, were forced back to work at the end of bayonets on June 2. The strike's end came a week after Brazilian President Fernando Cardoso ordered the army to occupy four refineries of the state-run Petrobras oil monopoly. Other workers have been drawn into the conflict with the government. A recent transit strike was part of a national protest against government policies which involved more than 300,000 workers.

Socialists jailed

SEVERAL MEMBERS of one of Socialist Worker's sister organisations, the International Socialists of South Korea, were jailed recently. They were charged with aiding North Korea, but their only crime was to criticise the lack of political freedom in the south.

Choi Il-bung was jailed for 18 months for translating socialist literature. Kim Dong Chul is serving two years. Ko Hee Yong is serving 18 months. Two other socialists, Yi Young Dop and Sin Ung Sup, are currently facing charges.

These trials and charges are part of a wider crackdown against the left and the trade unions. Independent Unions are starting to form and there has been a dramatic increase in industrial unrest.

Write to Choi Il-bung: Prison No 3288, PO Box 101, Anyang Kyungkido, South Korea, 430-080.

Refugees attacked

HUNDREDS OF Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong were injured last month when the governor of the British colony ordered riot police to attack them.

The 23,000 Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong are held in detention camps.

It's Not The French People

SO FAR we've seen an overwhelming response to the planned resumption of French nuclear testing in the Pacific.

Anti-nuclear protesters have taken to the streets all around the world, marching on French embassies, and petitioning their own governments.

Unfortunately, there has also been a lot of French bashing and anti-French hysteria whipped up by the media.

It is important to realise that it is not ordinary French workers, beneficiaries and their families that make the key decisions about the use of technology and resources in French society. While Chirac has increased government spending on the defence budget, ordinary French citizens are facing continued spending cuts to health, education, and welfare services (sounds familiar!) They are also facing further attacks on their wages and conditions.

While the great majority of the French population struggle to make ends meet, French bosses and their New Right cronies in power stand to directly profit from the massive

spending increases on defence. After all, the materials and technology needed for the resumption of underground testing will come from their businesses and factories.

The resumption of nuclear testing is not just a question for the French people, but a question for all workers, beneficiaries and their families in the world.

This is because it cen-

trally involves the question of who makes the key decisions in capitalist society about the use of resources and technology.

As it stands, these deci-

sions are made undemocratically with resources being used to produce profits for a tiny minority not to make the lives of majority of people any

easier.

Lets work to change that!

Evan Poata-Smith
Dunedin

letters to the editor

Agree? Disagree? Send a letter to: *Socialist Worker*, PO Box 8851, Auckland. Keep them brief, please.



"Real Gorgeous"

REAL GORGEOUS is an expose on how women have been targeted by advertising agencies to push, pound and pummel their bodies into being the mythical "10", and how women and men are sucked into valuing this ideal.

In her introduction, author Kaz Cooke explains:

"We need a book that isn't just about theory but about action: *how* to break out of the useless dieting cycle, *how* to deal with dorks who make comments about our appearance, *how* to accept a natural womanly shape, whether tall, small, thin or rounded."

Women's experience of

puberty, childbirth, child raising and domestic responsibility all contribute to a particular natural shape.

This naturalness has been invalidated by a materialistic society with an emphasis on competition and shallow values designed to diminish the self worth of the majority of women.

Kaz Cooke is a sane voice in the loud clamouring for women to be thin, to be young, to be plastic made up dummies, to be anything but happy with themselves.

Child raising can be an isolating experience where many women are confined to the home dependent on

the media to keep in touch with the larger world. This isolation is exploited to the maximum by the advertisers through magazines, newspapers and television.

Women are bombarded with images of wafer thin, wrinkle and stretch mark free 'successful' creatures which bear no resemblance to reality.

These role models are purely advertising weapons used to keep women buying the products the advertisers are paid to sell.

Kaz Cooke takes a witty

and dispassionate look at these products. Diet aids, diet books, diet foods, figure clinics, slimming tapes and videos, expensive potions and lotions, makeup, plastic surgery, and fashion wear are all products used by the body and style police to wage war on the basic self esteem of girls and women.

This book is a must read for all.

[Published by Allen & Unwin, \$29.95]

J.
Waiuku

LETTER TO JAILED KOREAN SOCIALIST

Choi Il-bung
Prison No 3288
PO Box 101
Anyang Kyungkido
Republic of South Korea
430-080

Dear Choi Il-bung,

I've just heard over the Internet about the 18 months prison sentence you've received for the "crimes" of translating socialist literature into Korean and appearing at a May Day rally selling socialist literature.

I am clear that the lit-

erature in question is as critical of the horrific state capitalist regime in Pyongyang as it is of the South Korean government and I think that sentencing you to prison for doing this is a travesty of justice that must be given worldwide publicity.

I shall take your case up with Amnesty International and contact the media about your case, and those who were sentenced along with you.

In addition, there are 10,000 Korean people liv-

ing and working in New Zealand, amongst which I have friends. I shall make a point of keeping them informed and encouraging them to write letters to the Korean language newspapers that are produced here.

I'm sure that knowing there are people around the world working to obtain your freedom from prison and freedom of speech will give you strength. Kia kaha!

Ramsey Margolis
Auckland

Goldfinger

(Sung to the tune "Goldfinger")

Goldfinger
Jim's the man who fancies the Midas touch
A spider's touch
A touch of Bolger finger
Workers must beware of the web of lies
That spreads like flies.

Jim adores Buddy Bill's Contracts Act
Cutting benefits to keep his pay intact
When the working class is finally laid low
He'll play Santa with a Ho! Ho! Ho!

Goldfinger
A decade of free market enterprise
Gave us a rise
The rise of Bolger finger
Knows precisely where our salvation's found
He's heaven-bound.

A little man with a bloody lot to say
About how working people should spend their pay
When he's shown a starving family or two
Tells the foodbanks they don't have enough to do.

Goldfinger
He's the man to show us all how to save
for an early grave
A grave that Bolger finger
and his pals will dig for us while we sleep
They'll dig it deep.

Liz Harley
Porirua

Labour, Alliance and the fight against the Nats

National must go...

SINCE 1990 the Nats have cut benefits, introduced market rents for state housing, attacked workers with the Employment Contracts Act, and raised student fees. At the same time the rich have never had it so good.

This has generated tremendous anger and bitterness within the working class. But many lack the confidence to fight. There is a general feeling that the Nats must go — but there is still a lack of confidence that we can fight on the ground to get them out.

The majority of workers look to the Labour and Alliance parties in order to get rid of National. Many believe that there is no alternative to waiting until the next election and then voting Labour or Alliance to get the Nats out.

Even many socialists believe that the best that we can achieve is a Labour and Alliance coalition government in 1996 which will increase taxes on the rich slightly in order to improve the welfare, health and education systems. They think that because there is no possibility of revolutionary change the best that we can hope for is minor reforms to the existing capitalist system.

The SWO considers that these ideas are not only mistaken — but that when put into practice they will have disastrous consequences for the working class. We consider that we cannot rely on either Labour or the Alliance to fight against the Nats and for a better world.

Fourth Labour Government — forerunner of the Nats

By BRIAN ROPER

BEFORE IT was elected in 1984 David Lange and the Labour Party promised to end Rob Muldoon's assault on the welfare state.

This was to be a government of consensus that would heal the divisions in society by ensuring that the less well off would be adequately cared for.

Lange and Labour's public relations outfit positioned Labour to the left of the third National Government.

Once it was elected Labour wasted no time in breaking almost every major promise it made in the run-up to the election. It soon became painfully clear that this Labour Government was composed of a band of unprincipled lairs hell bent on implementing a right-wing pro-capitalist agenda which viciously attacked its own working class members and supporters.

Real agenda

Labour's real agenda became known as 'Rogernomics'. Its central features included:

- a hard line monetarist approach to managing the economy;
- deregulation or 'market lib-

eralization' — particularly of foreign trade and the financial sector;

- the commercialization of the whole state sector resulting in over 135,000 job losses;
- one of the world's most extensive sell-offs of state assets;
- the biggest tax cuts for the rich in New Zealand's history;
- spending cuts on health, education and welfare;
- the introduction of so-called 'user pays' with large fee hikes for students and those dependent on the state health system;
- the first moves to 'deregulate the labour market' with the Labour Relations Act 1987 which was aimed at introducing enterprise bargaining.

Massive attack

Together these policies constituted a massive attack on the working class. Unemployment soared as Labour put reducing inflation ahead of creating jobs.

While the rich had a big increase in their incomes due to tax cuts, workers paid more tax than ever before through GST and so-called user charges.

Real wages fell as bosses went on the offensive. Student fees were raised to \$1250 per year. And benefits failed to keep up with inflation.

Too much talk, too little action. Labour leader — Helen Clark — talks tough but fails to lead a real fightback against the Nats.

Why did Labour attack us?

Many in the Alliance claim that the Labour Government was an exception — Lange, Douglas, Caygill, Prebble and the rest simply abandoned 'real Labour principles' such as the commitment to maintaining strong trade unions and the welfare state.

But this is not true. Right around the world reformist parties like Labour and the Alliance introduced monetarist policies and attacked workers during the 1980s. For example, the Hawke-Keating Government in Australia and the Socialist Party governments in France and Spain. And earlier the British Labour had done

the same from 1974-79.

Reformist parties, like the NZ Labour Party and the Alliance attack their supporters when in government because they are committed managing capitalism. And when capitalism is in crisis, as it has been since 1974, they try to solve this crisis by introducing policies which drive up profits at the expense of workers.

The fourth Labour Government tried to solve the economic crisis by boosting profits, cutting taxes on the rich, driving up unemployment which weakened the unions, and so forth. This was no exception — it was the norm for a reformist party governing in the midst of a capitalism crisis

Is Labour still a reformist party?

AS LABOUR broke promise after promise and launched attack after attack on its working class supporters, its members left in droves. Whereas paper party membership was over 100,000 in 1984, by 1990 it had fallen to less than 14,000.

Labour has traditionally been a working class party in terms of its membership, formal links to the trade unions, and its electoral support. However, its links to the work-

ing class have weakened considerably since 1984.

The most class conscious members left to help form the New Labour Party in 1989. Many major unions have disaffiliated in disgust at Labour's right-wing policies. And blue collar working class electoral support has shifted solidly towards the Alliance — particularly in Auckland.

With the collapse of its activist base and the departure of

by BARRY LEE

Founding of the NLP

The central figure in the Alliance, the NewLabour Party rose from the ruins of a Labour Party torn apart by Rogernomics policies of the last Labour Government. In five years of office, Labour membership fell from around 100,000 to 15,000. More left after the NLP was formed in June 1989.

The NLP founding conference was punctuated with clashes between those around NLP leader Jim Anderton who wanted a left social-democratic parliamentary party (modelled on the early Labour Party) and those who wanted a "socialist" party or to focus on mass action outside of parliament. The Anderton forces proved to be strongest.

While the NLP gutted the Labour Party of the bulk of its working class activists, it met strong opposition from the top leaderships of the Council of Trade Unions and most unions.

Founding president Matt McCarten, a former union organiser, later spoke of being "lined up on more than one occasion" and told "if you join this New Labour Party we will destroy you, and we will destroy any official who joins the NLP, because you are enemies of our class and you must be destroyed."

In 1990 the NLP focused on the sale of Telecom and initiated protests around NZ. In areas like Manawatu, with a strong activist base, lively pro-

tests were held. But overall activities were mainly kept to the "faithful" and little attempt was made to broaden the campaign.

McCarten told the 1990 NLP conference "we want to represent working people." "Sometimes getting up early to go out on a picket line to support striking workers, along with your NLP banner, is more useful than staying at home to work on your next policy amendment paper."

Anderton called on the CTU leadership to drop its support for a Labour government that had "destroyed the lives of tens of thousands of working people." It is time for workers and their unions to change to New Labour, he said.

In July NLP members, including new president Phil Amos, picketed a CTU regional conference in Hamilton. Amos said they'd "like to get the CTU to at least listen to the NLP" but "they don't seem to be prepared to do that."

At the same time the NLP had its hand out to big business. In 1989 it got \$10,000 from Brierleys. In February 1991 Anderton proposed to the NLP National Council that "NLP supportive business contacts" be asked to double their donations from \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year.

Building the Alliance

By August 1991 the search for an Alliance was on. Officials of NewLabour, the Greens, Mana Motuhake and the Democrats met on August

And the working class vote remains split between Labour and the Alliance.

This means that socialists have to work with and against members of the Labour Party when they are active on the ground. We work with them in fighting for higher wages, against student fees and market rents, and so forth. But we constantly criticize the Labour Party for failing to provide a real alternative to the anti-working class policies of the Nats.

Even the right-wing editor of *The Press* has acknowledged that the National Government is hamstrung. It is unlikely to be

19. Gilbert Myles, who later co-founded the Liberals, was also there. "What we have is a group of people who are committed to working toward forming an alternative government at the next election", said Democrat leader John Wright.

The Alliance presented an unlikely prospect. Left-of-Labour NLP was lining up with right wing Democrats, mainly middle-class Greens, with the right-wing Liberals waiting in the wings.

On September 5 Anderton predicted the Alliance would be formed by Xmas and likely to become government in 1993. The Democrats September conference endorsed the proposal as did an NLP conference in November. Political commentator Colin James wrote: "One senior [NewLabour] party official privately expressed the anticipation that an Alliance would deliver to New Labour.... the Green's votes and the Democrats money. What more could it ask?"

A month later the Alliance was launched. An interim policy was brought together for the Tamaki by-election in February. It was based on more government intervention in the economy, state ownership of key assets, rebuilding the welfare state and a "more progressive" tax system. It included

Is this the way to fight?

OLIVER RIDDELL, political editor of the *Christchurch Press*, observed that "The Alliance's abandonment ... of its 1993 election might promise to support the Government on questions of supply has shaken National's confidence in its ability to keep governing."

National's support within parliament is crumbling as National MPs defect to new parties like Meurant's Right of Centre Party. National now has only 47 MPs as against 52 for the other parties. It is so weak that it can no longer be sure of being able to push through new legislation.

Even the right-wing editor of *The Press* has acknowledged that the National Government is hamstrung. It is unlikely to be

repeal of the Employment Contracts Act, with minimum employment codes and encouragement of "worker participation".

By then NLP members were being told not to get too involved in mass protests because that could damage its electoral image. When NZ Rail was sold, and the National Government launched into its health "reforms", the Alliance missed out on the political advantages the NLP had gained with its Telecom protests. Centre stage over the NZ Rail sale went to Winston Peters, while Labour's Helen Clark stole the scene over health cuts.

NLP dominance

At the NLP conference in November 1992 national councillor Barry Gribben said Alliance policy represents NLP policy "more or less one hundred percent". McCarten told the Australian Green Left Weekly that "the ideology of the Alliance is driven by the New Labour Party and its policies".

Down the reformist road

During the Wellington Central by-election, an Alliance proposal to lift top income tax rates to 69% went down like a lead balloon in the country's wealthiest electorate, and

able to deregulate the postal service, split Electricity Corp, and even the privatisation of Radio NZ is in doubt.

Propping up the Nats

Despite their anti-Nat rhetoric — the only reason that National has been able to remain in power — and push through its right-wing policies — is because Alliance, Labour and NZ First have all helped to prop up the Nats.

After the 1993 elections when it appeared that the Nats would be unable to govern because of a hung parliament, Jim Anderton promised that the Alliance would not vote against the Nats on motions of confidence.

Then Labour broke with convention and supplied the Nats with one of their MPs (Peter Tapsell) to act as speaker. This reduced the opposition vote by

caused considerable dissent from wealthy Democrats and Liberals. Six months later a compromise of 40% was being discussed.

In July last year Alliance housing spokesperson Len Richards stirred up a hornets nest when he suggested state houses sold to speculators should be sized back without compensation. After a hot debate with Anderton and other Alliance leaders, Richards resigned from his position.

Today the Alliance claims around 20,000 members. 1,500 of these are considered "active". While the Trade Union Federation does not officially back either Labour or the Alliance, unofficially there are very close sympathies between many leaders of TUF unions and the Alliance. Most active unionists look to it as the only realistic alternative to the Nats.

A significant indication of the Alliance's gains inside unions is its signing up Auckland CTU convenor Bill Andersen and other members of his Socialist Party of Aotearoa, whose base is mainly union officials.

The TUF has asked Labour and the Alliance to endorse its "Just jobs, Just wages" campaign. The response to that will be a test of both parties in the eyes of many workers.

one. Labour has further assisted the Nats to attack the poor in the interests of the rich by pairing — that is, removing its MPs from the house to allow National MPs to be absent from the house.

So even in terms of parliamentary politics Labour and the Alliance have done little to bring down the Nats.

No fight

But if its record in fighting the Nats inside parliament has been bad, the Labour Party's record outside has been disgraceful. It has failed to give any active support to the struggles against the Nats taking place on the ground.

While the Alliance has been better, its electoral emphasis always downgrades the importance of strikes and protests. They are seen as secondary to the main goal — winning the next election.

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26 June 1995 SOCIALIST WORKER 9

Socialism

Capitalism is a system of exploitation which generates inequality, crisis and war.

Although workers create society's wealth, it is controlled by the ruling class for its own selfish ends.

Socialism can only be built when the working class takes control of social wealth and democratically plans its production and distribution to meet human needs, not private profits. This will eliminate all class divisions in society.

Stalinist countries such as China and Cuba, just like the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, have nothing to do with socialism. They are state capitalist. We support the struggles of workers against every dictatorial stalinist ruling class.

Revolution not reformism

The present system cannot be reformed to end exploitation and oppression, contrary to what Alliance, Labour and union leaders claim. It must be overthrown by the working class.

Capitalism's parliament, army, police and judiciary protect the ruling class. These institutions cannot be taken over and used by the working class.



**where
we
stand**

To pave the way to socialism the working class needs a new kind of state – a democratic workers state based on workers councils and workers militia.

Internationalism

Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is global.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We fight racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support all genuine national liberation struggles.

We are internationalists because socialism depends on spreading working class revolutions around the world.

Liberation from oppression

We fight for democratic rights. We oppose the oppression of women, Maori, Pacific Islanders, lesbians and gays.

All forms of oppression are used to divide the working class.

We support the right

of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence. Their liberation is essential to socialist revolution and impossible without it.

Tino rangatiratanga

We support the struggle for Maori self determination.

The government's approach to Treaty claims has benefited a Maori elite while doing little for working class Maori.

Tino rangatiratanga cannot be achieved within capitalism. It will only become a reality with the establishment of a workers state.

Revolutionary party

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a mass revolutionary socialist party.

We are in the early stages of building such a party through involvement in the day-to-day struggles of workers and the oppressed.

The Socialist Workers Organisation must grow in size and influence to provide leadership in the struggle for working class self-emancipation.

We need to revitalise the unions with a rank-and-file movement.

If you like our ideas and want to fight for socialism, then join us.

SOCIALIST WORKER

\$8,000 Appeal

List 2

AUCKLAND:

Mick \$20; Stewart \$5; PD \$1; John F. \$20; Garage Sale \$114.80; Money Raiser \$140; Wynne \$37.50; Jim \$50; Percy \$5; Harold \$20; Jane \$15; Peter \$10; Rick \$20; Dean \$25; Ken \$10; John M. \$50; Paul \$10; Warren \$30.

Total: \$583.30.

TIMBERLANDS:

Branch Effort \$1,000.

WAIKATO:

Cliff \$50; R & R \$100; Michelle & Shane \$100; Marion & Karl \$50; Branch Effort \$300; Troy \$50; Steve \$50. Total: \$700.

CHRISTCHURCH:

City Street \$1.20; Lyttleton Picket \$1; Trades Council \$1; Job \$40.

Total \$43.20.

This week's total: \$2,326.50.
Progress total: \$2,627.50.

SWO branch meetings - all welcome

AUCKLAND 7.30 pm every Tuesday at the Socialist Centre, 86 Princes St, Onehunga. Phone 634 3984. Next meeting July 5.

Paper sales Every Saturday, meet at the Socialist Centre at 10am.

Sunday July 2

SWO Rebuild our Unions Forum.
11 am. Socialist Centre. Shared lunch.
Introduction from TUF speaker and SWO representative.

WAIKATO 7pm every second Tuesday at the Red Cross Rd, London St, Hamilton. Phone Karl in Huntly 828 9471 or Andrew in Hamilton 854 7264. Next meeting July 5.

TIMBERLANDS 7 pm every second Tuesday at Apumoana marae, Tarawera Rd. Phone Bernie 345 9853 or Martial 357 4536 in Rotorua.

- ☐ June 27 **Who profits from the housing crisis?**
- ☐ July 11 **Maori sovereignty.**

WELLINGTON 7.45 pm every second Monday at People's Resource Centre, 2 Luke Lane (off Te Aro Park). Phone Gordon 387 7380.

- ☐ July 3 **Enterprise Education: What is it?**
- Paper sales** 12 noon to 1.30pm every Thursday at Manners Mall.

CHRISTCHURCH 7.30 pm every second Sunday at the WEA, 59 Gloucester St. Phone Roy 384 4681.

- ☐ July 2 **Political Correctness: The debate.**

DUNEDIN 7.30pm every Thursday at the Clubs & Societies Building, 84 Albany St. Phone Brian or Laurel 4736 047.

- ☐ June 29 **Bosnia: Is there a solution?**
- ☐ July 6 **The impact of the ECA on women.**

OTHER AREAS The Socialist Workers Organisation also has members and supporters in North Shore, Paeroa, Napier, Kawerau, Raglan, Palmerston North, Timaru and the West Coast. They can be contacted via the Socialist Centre in Auckland (09) 634 3984.

join the socialists

- ☐ I want to join the Socialist Workers Organisation
- ☐ I want more information about membership

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Union/campus _____

Send to: SWO, PO Box 8851, Auckland

**"Philosophers
have merely
interpreted
the world.
The point is
to change it."
— Karl Marx**

Who really runs NZ?

WHO REALLY does run New Zealand? We are led to believe that it is the Prime Minister, cabinet, parliament or all three generously offering to run the nation on our behalf. They claim to democratically represent us by allowing us three seconds every three years to tell them what we want. Of course they are not bound by the mountain of election promises they make that are inevitably broken.

Everyone is supposed to have an indirect say in running the country because everyone over the age of 18 can vote. If anyone wants to change government policy then the way to do it is to get involved in one of the major parliamentary parties.

But is this really the way to work for change? Is government in NZ really democratic?

If this was true then surely the interests of women, Maori and workers would be as well represented in government, and the actions of parliament, as the interests of business? If this were the case then we may have seen some 'trickle down' instead of 'trickle up' in the current recovery.

Nature of parliament

Even if the government was accountable to the electorate, and it isn't, it is hard to see us indirectly running the country. There's no guarantee if parliament were made up of 99 women, workers or Maori that would get rid of class inequality, women's oppression or racism.

Parliament is severely limited because the most decisive area of society – the economy – is not democratically controlled, but remains in the hands of big business.

If parliament somehow gets out of hand and doesn't deliver to the needs of business the big corporations simply take their money out of the country. This crushes the economy, and no doubt the government as it is dependent on money from business to fund itself.

So if parliament broke with 150 years of tradition and started representing the interests of the vast majority then big business can simply hold the economy to ransom.

Generally business only needs to employ subtle measures

to maintain their control. Pro-business economic ideas find little opposition in parliament. Pro-business economic ideas find little opposition in parliament because government MPs share the same social circles, privileged class origins, similar educations and conservative political values with 'prominent' business leaders.

Many officials who start off working for government departments wind up with cushy jobs in the private sector, so they are unlikely to want a reputation for being unfriendly towards business.

Ultimately though, the reason big business really runs New Zealand is the huge amount of pressure they can bring to bear on the government. Big business interests control television, radio, and print media in the country.

They can also fund advertising campaigns, research, and anonymously donate colossal amounts of money to political parties who best represent their interests.

With the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, a monopoly on information, influence over government and elections, business runs New Zealand behind the 'democratic' facade of parliament.

Democracy for rich

This leaves parliament as little more than an institution through which the ruling class made up of rich capitalists maintains its power and suppresses the aspirations of the majority.

It is not hard to see a direct match between business recommendations to government and the actions of government. The Employment Contracts Act, repealing Pay Equity, and the fiscal envelope are only in the interests of business – not workers, women or Maori.

As long as the capitalist system remains – with its exploitation, inequality and oppression – the interests of the majority will be directly opposed to the interests of business.

Only when democracy is extended to the economy and extensively introduced at every level of society will the majority finally run New Zealand.

The occupiers

THE UPSURGE in Maori militancy this year "left most of us bewildered and sullen" wrote one Pakeha commentator. He'd probably better brace himself, because nothing is surer than Maori continuing to fight for their rights in the future stronger and more united than ever.

But what a fuss the media made over the occupation of a few small and in some cases, previously ignored bits of land. Motua gardens for example – less than two acres stuck between the river and a run down industrial area, completely avoided by most Wanganui citizens prior to this year.

Maori land claims have tended to be modest and justified. If you want to know about an occupation that was neither, I heard of one the other day in an overseas country. Apparently a very small extremist group took over virtually all the land that was worth having. Farmland, forestry, industrial land and acre after acre of commercial and residential property.

Not content with owning most of the land, the occupiers took control of all the industry in the country. All the factories, shops, transport and the banks.

And because business and industry were so overwhelmingly dominated by the small group of occupiers the other residents of the country were forced to ask the occupiers for work, just to earn a living.

The occupiers provided

work – for some of the people. But the occupiers provided it only on condition that the workers wages always amounted to much less than the value of the goods which they produced. And the occupiers reserved all rights to hire, fire, control production and close down or start up new enterprises.

Not content with owning the business side of the country, the occupiers took over the social services.

Increasingly hospitals were operated not to give good care, but to make profits, to the extent that helpless old people were thrown out on to the streets if they



couldn't pay. In the field of education the occupiers kept the very best for their own children and left the rest to rot.

Not content with controlling the work, health and education of others, the occupiers sought to control their minds. All the main newspapers, and the radio stations and TV were either controlled or owned outright by the occupiers. You can imagine the shallow mindless entertainment and gutless journalism that resulted from this!

All these impositions were guaranteed for the occupiers by their very own police force and standing army, which they were quite ready to use in the event of any resistance from the occupied people.

I'm not sure exactly where this country is, but its name is Dnalaezwen and the occupiers are called the capitalist class.

Now there's an occupation to get sullen about. Please god it doesn't happen here.

Socialist Review

Write to Socialist Review, PO Box 82, London E3 3LH or purchase a copy for \$3.50 from your local Socialist Worker seller or write to PO Box 8851, Auckland.

Articles in the June issue include:

- Is there an alternative to the market?
- Strained relations – what's wrong with immigration controls?
- Plus film and book reviews.

The best socialist monthly magazine

The 1871 Paris Commune

FOR NEARLY three months in 1871 workers proved - for the first time in history - that they could run society. But it was a short-lived experiment. After 72 days the French ruling class crushed the revolt savagely. HASSAN MAHAMDALLIE describes what Marx hailed as the first 'working class government'.

The workers of Paris had suffered 20 years of repressive rule under Emperor Napoleon III, the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon III dragged France into war with Germany in 1870. Within a month the French army was smashed and Napoleon was taken prisoner.

It signalled the defeat of the empire. Workers rose in revolt and declared a new republic.

But the old regime was replaced by a government of the rich, led by a man called Thiers, who headed the National Assembly.

The mass of people suffered poverty and starvation and continual bombardment as the victorious German army laid siege to Paris.

The French government was forced to arm workers and organize them into a National Guard.

Workers fight back

The siege radicalized workers. On 28 January 1871 the government surrendered to the Germans. Thiers made an abortive attempt to disarm the Parisian workers from his hideout in Versailles.

But the National Guard,



Workers on the barricades defending the Paris Commune.

largely made up of workers, took control of the city, and the Paris Commune was born.

State must be smashed

The revolutionary - Karl Marx - viewing the Commune from exile in London, immediately saw its significance.

In his pamphlet *The Civil War in France*, completed just as the Paris Commune fell, he hailed it as a "working class government".

Democracy is a sham in capitalist society. The vast majority of people are given little power.

We may get the opportunity to put a cross on a piece of paper every few years. But the real decisions about how society is run are completely beyond our control.

The apparatus of the state - such as the police, the legal system and the army - exist to protect the ruling class.

Marx concluded from the experience of the Commune that the old state could not just be taken

over and used by the working class.

The state had to be smashed and new organizations put in its place.

Real democracy

The delegates who were elected to the Commune were under the direct control of those who had elected them. If workers were dissatisfied with their representatives they could recall them and elect someone new.

Everyone could participate in decision making.

One of the Commune's first acts was to dissolve the army.

It opened up education - then the preserve of the privileged - to all.

It created a department of public assistance to make sure people's needs, like healthcare, were met.

Judges and other officials were accountable and to be elected.

Everyone would receive workers' wages. As Marx observed, "From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workman's wages."

Paris experienced a new kind of peace, despite the German siege and the attacks of Thiers' troops from Versailles.

Workers burned the guillotine down straight away. The whole atmosphere of the city had changed. "The streets of Paris were safe, and that without any police of any kind," wrote Marx.

Rulers' Revenge

The Commune was a magnificent achievement. But it also made mistakes.

Perhaps the biggest was the Communards' failure to go on the military offensive against the Versailles government.

It enabled Thiers' troops to blockade Paris by the end of April 1871 and to advance into the city.

The Communards erected street barricades and fought with great bravery. But by 28 May it was over.

An orgy of ruling class violence followed, under the guise of restoring "law and order".

The ruling class slaugh-

tered 30,000 men, women and children in one week.

Thousands were lined up against walls and massacred.

The bourgeoisie returned: "Elegant and joyous women, as in a pleasure trip, betook themselves to the corpses, and, to enjoy the sight of the valorous dead, with the ends of their sunshades raised their last coverings."

The ruling class re-established order. The first workers' experiment in self rule was defeated.

But a few decades later in 1917 revolutionaries in Russia would draw on the lessons of the 1871 Paris Commune when they carried out the first successful workers' revolution in history. The Paris Commune had shown that a workers' government was possible.

Further reading

The Civil War in France by Karl Marx
History of the Paris Commune by Lissagaray

WORKING AT THE PIECART: *Getting Your Vision Back*

CURRENTLY TOURING the main centres' art galleries is a retrospective of the paintings, prints and sculptures of the artist Tony Fomison.

Fomison, who died at Waitangi in 1990, was a terrible man for the drink. Anyone who could upend and swallow the best part of a bottle of illegally-brewed Irish poteen (which he did in my kitchen one St Patrick's night) is bound to end up with, in the words of one earnest critic, "an intense, inward-looking dark vision... a sense of voices and powers speaking to us... a feeling of how strange it is to be alive."

He wrote this about his life:

"Dad worked at the Dunlop rubber mills in Woolston for over thirty years; I always assumed that I was going to lead a working class life too and that I would only paint in the nights or the weekends. In my fifth form year I arranged to take up a boiler-maker's apprenticeship, figuring that my being small would make it easy to climb in and out of those things.

"But the chap in charge of the art department came up to me and reckoned that I should go to Art School. He must have got in touch with the Art School and

come up with some yarn. My family being working class, they let me stay at home board free while I was going to Art School.

"I got an Arts Council travel grant in 1963, having finally got my painting act together."

"After my stay in Europe, a New Zealand art collector lent me the money for my return fare which I was to pay back in paintings. But he decided that I lost my vision while I was overseas so instead of being able to pay back the fare with art work, I had to spend the year full-time working at the Hereford Street piecart in Christchurch.

"So it was a return not just to my country but also to the room at home in which I grew up and the good old working class!

"I must have got 'my vi-

sion' back since I've been working as an artist now for over twenty years. This has inevitably brought me into contact with the wealthy middle class since, as a painter, I rely on their patronage to earn a living. But I'll always remain working class."

He was devoted to Polynesian culture and identified with the oppressed. He was a familiar figure on 1981 Springbok Tour marches, but paintings entitled "Started on Sharpeville Day" are far less indicative of his work than those with titles like "Dark Thoughts". His images are compelling, come from his subconscious and settle unsettlingly inside us. It is strange to be alive.



Tony Fomison, Self portrait

Tony Fomison's works are currently on display at the Auckland City Art Gallery.

WAR-WEARY VIEWERS

HAD ENOUGH of World War II? I lost interest just after Tripoli. Or was it Benghazi? I dunno. Somewhere in the Western Desert of Communicado's epic **New Zealand At War** I just drifted off and no amount of techno-babble about armour-plating on tanks could awaken my brain until we got near the end and – almost guiltily – considered the conchies, the First Echelon's mutiny, the near-dictatorship of Prime Minister Peter Fraser and the looting and murder of prisoners that took place in Italy.

As a whole, the series seemed painted up in a didn't-we-show-Rommel-and-Mother-England jingoism. I've read and heard of panicking New Zealand infantrymen fleeing from their positions in Greece, of terrified officers in Crete digging trenches so deep they couldn't climb out, of kiwi soldiers (including the General Secretary of NZ's Communist Party) desperately sacrificed in the Eighth Army's race to secure northern Italy and prevent its industries falling into the hands of partisan workers' councils; I've heard of workers here shanghaied into the army for striking and then slung right back out again for organising the men, of hard-won pay and conditions being slavishly conceded by Fraser's union-leader mates while big business made big profits...

And didn't our legendary leader "Tiny" Fryberg find, on his return to New Zealand after the war, that the Auckland wharfies wouldn't unload his personal loot because he notoriously scabbed in the 1913 Maritime Strike?

There are facts, and there is truth. **New Zealand At War** selected a whole lot of facts to weary us with. By way of contrast, Gaylene Preston's documentary **War Stories** simply interviewed seven women and gave us something of the spell-binding truth.

Mad George, wise Mao

TEN YEARS ago Dun Mihaka, charged with baring his buttocks to a royal personage, read into the court record of the Wellington Lower Court a short history of the British royals which included an account of George III trying to shake hands with an oak under the impression it was Frederick the Great of Prussia.

The Madness Of King George is a movie about this very same George, presenting him as a gentle, well-meaning king (as opposed to the slippery historical figure) attempting to survive palace intrigue during a period of relative calm in the body politic (that is, between the age of spontaneous armed rising and that of organised political agitation).

Like Dun's performance, it's entertaining, well-crafted and well-acted, but whereas Dun was, like the

best of comedy, wonderfully subversive, this is not.

To Live, is a film about a Chinese family set, as seems to be the norm for just about all Chinese films these days, "against the tumult of recent Chinese history".

A man and his wife lose a house to his rabid gambling during the capitalist 1940s, lose a son to the economic lunacy of the 1950s' Great Leap Backward, and finally lose their remaining daughter (in the most comically absurd of circumstances) to the violent political chicanery of the 1960s' Cultural Revolution. And remain ever-hopeful.

It's absolutely absorbing.

Finally, two movies that have just opened: **Priest** and **Before Sunrise**.

Priest I haven't seen, but it should need no further recommendation to *Social-*

ist Worker readers than to say it's scripted by Jimmy McGovern, the Liverpool socialist who wrote the TV series **Cracker** ("British justice? What - innocent till proved Irish?") and takes a parish priest living in sin and preaching socialism and contrasts him with his horrified new curate, a Thatcherite who has repressed his own terrifying sexuality (he's gay).

Before Sunrise I have seen. American boy meets French girl and they wander through Vienna, talking all night and finally kissing.

Full of little truths, it is totally beguiling in its lingering romance.

A comrade from the British SWP once told me foreign travel should be made free and compulsory for the young.

Before Sunrise gives some of the reason why.

No chickens at Tegel

NORTH & SOUTH

Food & Beverage Union members at three Tegel chicken plants – Manurewa, Te Horo and Christchurch – have been on strike over their contract.

They want to retain a national contract plus get a pay rise of 4 per cent.

Before the Tegel strike, a group of Manurewa workers visited the Enza picket line. They came back all fired up and ready to take direct action against their own employer.

This demonstrates how one positive example can have a ripple effect through differ-

ent sections of workers.

When Tegel tried to keep up production in Auckland by sending cases to Chubby Chicken to be filled, the workers there refused to unload them.

It's this sort of practical solidarity that helps win strikes.

As we go to press, the company has agreed to return to the table with the union. If the talks fail, then the union is ready to call another round of strikes.

And judging by the spirit on the Manurewa picket line, the workers are ready to go.

Drums beat on picket line

AUCKLAND

The beating of Pacific Island drums on the picket line communicated the determination of Wiremakers workers to stop their boss cutting job conditions.

The 75 factory workers went on strike to prevent management making lower grade staff do higher grade jobs without extra pay.

And they're demanding that their union – the Engineers – be included in meetings with the company, which management doesn't want.

Wiremakers is owned by Fletcher Challenge, the country's most profitable firm. The site contract doesn't run out till December.

The company's general manager, Rhys Jones, has publicly condemned the strike as "illegal".

But the workers say they're not going back to work until their demands are met.

As we go to press, their strike is four days old – and they're still beating their drums on the picket line.

Rent strike escalates

AUCKLAND

Over 300 state tenants have signed up for SHAC's partial rent strike in the last month or so. More are joining every day.

They will start paying only 25 per cent of their income to Housing NZ after July 1, when market rents take full effect.

They join SHAC's core group of 40 who're still safe in their homes after 18 months on the partial rent strike.

SHAC chairperson Peter Hughes describes the mood of state tenants as "very angry".

SHAC meetings

10am every Friday at the Socialist Centre, 86 Princes St, Onehunga. Ph 6343984. All state tenants welcome.

Bitter union row splits Tegel workers

by GRANT MORGAN

AN INTER-UNION row has spilled into the open because of the Tegel contract dispute.

Until last year, all five Tegel factories were covered by the Food & Beverage Union.

Now the Engineers Union covers the New Plymouth plant and most of the staff at Christchurch. Henderson is largely de-unionised.

Officials of the Food & Beverage Union slam their counterparts in the Engineers Union for "raiding" their members and settling a site contract at New Plymouth.

These activities, say the Food & Beverage Union, have undermined the national contract and allowed Tegel to split the workforce and sign up large numbers on individual contracts.

In response, the Engineers Union claim that the incompetence of their rivals amounted to "a de-unionising strategy" and they merely stepped in to maintain effective organisation.

Due to lack of space, *Socialist Worker* must defer an in-depth analysis of this inter-union row until next issue.

However, it's important to note here the negative effect this row has already had on the ability of Tegel workers to get a decent settlement.

Tegel's Christchurch plant is virtually a monopoly supplier to the South Island. 35 workers belong to the Food & Beverage Union, which called strike action. The 125 in the Engineers Union and the 40 who are de-unionised kept on working.

If all of the Christchurch workers had gone on strike for even a day or two, probably

the company would have been forced to concede defeat rather than risk seeing its monopoly position eroded by North Island suppliers eager to crack the southern market.

But it wasn't to be. Instead, Tegel took advantage of the inter-union row to divide and rule.

This terrible situation must be challenged by rank-and-file

Tegel workers. They need to take united action against the boss if they are to improve their wages, conditions and rights.

United we stand, divided we fall.

Tegel striker, Auckland

"I've been here nine years, and there's never been a strike. I never thought I'd ever be on a picket line. But now that I'm here, I'm loving it."

BUILD THE FIGHTBACK, BUILD THE PARTY

by GRANT MORGAN

A RASH of industrial disputes has erupted recently.

Strikes at the Enza, Tegel and Wiremakers factories and the protests at Lyttelton Port are covered on these pages.

Other unionists who've taken action include Carter Holt Harvey process workers, state servants, Gisborne and Tauranga wharfies, airline cabin crews and engineers, local body office workers, medical technicians, railworkers, Countrywide Bank staff, Tasman boilermakers and university lecturers.

The breadth of people involved is further evidence that the upturn in worker activism continues to gain momentum.

While workers still suffer from a lack of confidence, most are more angry and more militant than they've been in years.

There is a refreshing "have a go" mood on picket lines these days. It's being boosted by many examples of practical solidarity, such as the visits of Enza and Tegel workers to each other's picket lines in Auckland.

And every picket line is blasted by the honks of passing motorists. While this majority support is still largely passive, it could be prompted into action by the courage of any fightback.

Having effect

The rank-and-file upsurge is having an effect on both left and right wing union officials.

Buoyed by the upbeat mood, the left wing Trade Union Federation is pushing for pay settlements of 4 per cent or more. This is helping break down the bosses 2 per cent wage barrier which, until a few months ago, was still holding strong.

And the right wing Engineers Union is starting to talk tough as it negotiates for low-paid factory workers demanding a share of the profit recovery. Even a change of rhetoric by Aotearoa's most business-friendly union leaders is a significant indicator of where the class struggle is heading.

We're certainly not in revolutionary times, but we are entering a period of sharp clashes between bosses and workers.

The growing gulf between rich and poor is spurring on workers, who create NZ's wealth but get little in return.

A weakness in the growing fightback is the lack of permanent, organised links between different sections of workers despite a growing sense of class solidarity.

There are lots of jobsites where workers in different unions and trades don't have a combined site committee and therefore find it hard to present a united front to their

manager.

And it's rare for union delegates on different jobsites to have regular contact with each other, let alone think of forming multi-site action committees to fight the bosses together.

Making links

We need to link different sections of workers together so that we fight as a united class, which alone will give us the collective strength to defeat the powerful capitalist state.

And the upturn in worker activism means the time is right to advance this process, which couldn't be done during the years of downturn.

The growing mood of anger and militancy is largely an unplanned happening.

But it opens up great possibilities once there is planned activity to support each struggle and to build a socialist party able to link all the different struggles together.

We need a party of activists aiming to abolish the system that's screwing all workers, not a reformist parliamentary party that wants to manage the system.

We need a socialist party that brings together job delegates and union militants from all round the country so we can organise united actions against the system.

So – join the Socialist

Workers Organisation. Take extra copies of *Socialist Worker* onto your job. Bring your workmates along to SWO branch meetings.

Building a united fightback and a strong party go hand-in-hand. The place for every activist is with the socialists.

WHERE'S THE ACTION?

ON 2 September 1994, CTU president Ken Douglas advocated a combined trade union campaign to fight for big pay rises.

He said unions should break the law if necessary to obtain the contracts they want.

But no observable practical steps have yet been taken by the head of the Council of Trade Unions to mobilise workers around a united pay campaign.

Dating from his speech, there's still

**no action
from Ken after
284 days**

Wharfies fight casualisation

LYTTELTON

Stormy wharf pickets protesting the use of casual, non-union, low-paid workers disrupted the loading of Enza's last shipment of apples this season.

The Apple & Pear Board subsidiary had let the loading contract to Quay Stevedoring Services, a Nelson-based firm.

According to the Waterside Workers Union, Quay's casual workers were paid 40 per cent less than their members for the contract.

Hurled placards

100 wharfies, seafarers and harbour workers hurled placards and yelled "scab!" when Quay's casuals, many wearing balaclavas to hide their identity, were convoyed off Lyttelton wharf on the evening of June 16.

The 20 police were only just able to force the angry picketers back and allow the casuals to leave.

The casuals had only worked an hour or so because truck drivers carting the apples refused to break the picket line.

But in mid-afternoon, union leaders agreed to allow the picket to be pushed back by police without excessive resistance so the trucks could pass. In return, the port company agreed not to serve trespass notices on protesters or suspend workers.

Next morning the police squad was far larger and, consequently, more aggressive. They faced 150 picketers. The cops arrested four, and another two the following day.

June 18 saw the final round of pickets. Again, the 80 early morning picketers were informed by union leaders that it was to be a passive protest and they were to allow themselves to be pushed back by the cops.

Not everyone followed the script. About one third of the picketers shoved back against the police, and considerable muscle had to be used to remove them and allow the casuals across.

However, for five hours the truck drivers refused to cross the picket line.

About 1pm the port company served a trespass notice on the picketers, whose numbers had swelled to 120.

A stopwork meeting was called for picketers and workers arriving for the 3pm shift. There were lots of angry



voices calling for a port strike.

Union officials informed the meeting that arrests could be made for trespass and that a strike would be illegal under the Employment Contracts Act.

They said the port company was considering issuing suspension notices against on-duty workers for attending the

stopwork meeting.

Harbour workers returned to work after the suspension threat.

The officials advised everyone to abide by the trespass warning so they didn't get arrested or fined.

Despite the anger, the picket then dissolved.

70 decided to demonstrate

on the main street where the casuals would have to pass.

The three days of protests added a significant amount of time to loading the boat. This will have cost Enza dear.

But has it cost the company enough to make it back away from using casuals? That's the question wharfies are asking. Time will tell.

What was the objective?

by GRANT MORGAN

"WHAT WAS our objective? To physically stop the casuals or simply protest against their use?"

Following the picket line clashes, that question was strongly debated on the Lyttelton waterfront.

A workforce finds it very hard to unite its own ranks and make a credible call for outside support unless its objectives are clear to all

before the fight begins.

And the very process of debate about what should be the objectives also shows which people support what objectives.

Then, once certain objectives have been adopted, it becomes easier for workers to pick the best people to lead the fight for these objectives.

That's one of the key lessons to come out of the Lyttelton dispute.

THE REAL THUGS

POLICE MINISTER John Luxton accused the Lyttelton picketers of being "unionised thugs".

Luxton is a multi-millionaire and the richest person in parliament. It's natural he should see unionists defending their jobs against a profiteering company employing low-paid casuals as nothing more than "thugs".

In the eyes of worker activists, however, the real thugs are the police who act as well-paid enforcers of the rich and powerful.

The law allows them to carry offensive weapons and attack workers on picket lines.

Have you ever heard of the police attacking an employer for locking out unionists and employing scabs?

By themselves, the police could never defeat a united working class. That's why politicians like Luxton try to brainwash workers and get them fighting each other by portraying picketers as "unionised thugs".

Whose team?

MILLIONS OF dollars were spent by Enza on Black Magic in the America's Cup.

Yet the same company doesn't want to share its wealth with the workers.

Enza hired a stevedoring company at Lyttelton that cut wages by 40 per cent.

And Enza tried to slash the wage claims of workers at its South Auckland factory.

Yet it says everyone in NZ should "work as a team" just like Black Magic.

An employer's concept of a "team" is where he is the captain, makes the rules and wins all the prizes while the workers put in all the effort.

Total victory at Enza

AUCKLAND

Total victory. That's what 60 Enza workers gained after a six day walkout from their juice factory in early June.

They got a 4 per cent pay rise, increases in meal money and shift allowance, an extra four days sick leave, an 8x2 redundancy package and temporaries to be made permanent after two months.

The icing on the cake was a "return to work" payment equal to four of their six strike days.

It's been a long time since any group of workers has been paid for going on strike.

The key ingredients in the victory were total workplace unity and a strong picket which prevented the boss from trucking product out of store.

There was a bit of "argy bargy" to repel a contract driver. Somehow, the truck suffered a flat tyre.

The picket got good support from other groups of food processing workers, such as ETA, Bluebird and Tegel.

Enza caved in after fearing the loss of market share to its rivals.

Food & Beverage Union official Shane Te Pou said the strong backing from the Trade Union Federation was "important".

"There is growing militancy among workers," he stated. "They're going for a bigger share."

Stop All Nuclear Tests

by Nicola McNaughton

THE FALLOUT from French President Jacques Chirac's announcement last week that France would be resuming its nuclear tests on Mururoa Atoll, has been widespread.

Thousands have taken to the streets of Paris protesting at their government's decision. Greenpeace has sent the Rainbow Warrior 2 to Mururoa, Rugby League fans displayed their messages on banners in Palmerston North and the French Consulate in Perth was fire bombed.

The reactions have not done anything to the French Government's conscience and if anything their resolve has been further strengthened. The French are now offering monetary incen-

tives for South Pacific nations to take a more lenient view of the tests.

France began nuclear tests in another of their colonies in 1960 when they exploded the first bombs in Algeria. They exploded 17 bombs in all, in Algeria, but had to move their test site when Algeria gained independence in 1962.

Testing resumed in 1966 on the South Pacific atoll Mururoa.

Since 1966 the French government have exploded around 170 bombs in the Pacific, the first 44 tests were atmospheric.

The remainder of tests have been underground since Australia and New Zealand took France to the World Court in 1975.

Despite the fact that the French Government claim there is no danger

to humans, there is unknown damage to the core of the atoll. But it is not just a question of harm to humans or the environment.

It is about the absolute waste of billions of dollars on creating weapons of mass destruction. It is about spending money trying to keep ahead of the next nuclear power.

Governments authorise the spending of hundreds of billions of dollars on developing and testing nuclear arms, while people are starving, and living in garages or on the streets.

While people have limited access to education, health and childcare, Governments are asking them to accept further cuts in their standard of living while siphoning off huge amounts of tax dol-

lars for defence purposes.

The French Government is not the first to resume nuclear testing and it appears that it will not be the last!

We must continue to protest against the super-

powers and their stockpiling of nuclear arms. We must fight against a system which apparently condones death and mass destruction yet fails to provide the basic necessities of life.

How to fight the tests

by Brian Roper

EVERY SUCCESSFUL movement against war, arms build ups, and nuclear testing has been built from below by people building mass movements and protests. They have not relied on diplomatic government manoeuvres nor on the empty political talk of politicians like Paul Keating, Jim Bolger and Helen Clark. We need to organise protests in New Zealand on the largest scale possible.

It was only after years of campaigning and militant protests that the Labour Government was forced to ban nuclear ship visits.

Opposition to nuclear ship visits is so great now that even the Nats have not felt able to reverse this policy.

Mass protest action is the win to stop the tests.

We need to put pressure on the government to take real action. The reality is that the National Government is still in bed with

the United States. Because France remains one of the US's major allies in Europe, the National Government will take no real action like sending frigates to support the Rainbow Warrior in case this upsets the US government.

Labour Prime Minister Norman Kirk sent a frigate in the early 1970s. At present a New Zealand frigate is in the Middle East supporting the US blockade of Iraq. This is a disgrace. That frigate should be in the South Pacific protesting against the tests.

We should fight these tests. But we also need to be clear that it is the French ruling class and its conservative President Jacques Chirac that wants these tests - not the French people. French workers and students have been fighting back against the attacks of the conservative French government ever since it was elected in 1993.

They don't want these tests either.

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